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To the Food and Drug Administration:

The entire charade revolving around irradiated food has become a bizarre spectacle. When irradiation was first given the green light by the FDA several years ago its approval was with the understanding that it would be product labeled as such in bold type bearing a Radura symbol, without a time limitation. From that point on the powers that are have gradually worked their will; through Congressional Riders and other revisions with the preconception of making visual identification of an irradiated product more difficult to verify, and eventually, in this step by step assault expunging the label altogether. It was last year, I believe, when congress enacted a revision in labeling whereby the notification print was relegated to the ingredient list which compressed the print size to almost microscopic proportions.

Now the resounding query emanating from the FDA is whether, "Labeling is necessary at all." Evidently from what one can gather from this new twist of events is whether the consumer merits any consideration when confronted with corporate muscle flexing. Indications are that agencies such as the FDA are seemingly more receptive to their dictates than the populations dependence on the FDA to protect their vital interests. You must have some concept how people assess the governments unilateral restrictions of the publics' right to be informed what food processing procedures products have been subjected to.

The USDA attempted to foist new regulations on organically grown fruits and vegetables. The changes were so outrageous that over a hundred thousand protests were lodged in defiance.

USDA recanted knowing that they had overstepped their bounds. The FDA will run into the same

granite wall if they delude the public by either deleting labeling requirements or using pseudonym, such as cold pasteurization or electronic.

As for the fear factor that would impact sales it should not be the overriding consideration in denying the consumer the right to know what they are purchasing. If all questionable products were to be protected against disclosure there would be no need for oversight agencies.

Labeling, you recall, was part of the original consent agreement governing irradiation of food. If portions of the pact can be excerpt the laws become trivialized. Don't make a sham out of the labeling provision. The FDA under the directorship of commissioner Jane Henney has recently come under critical review about drug approval failures. Don't compound the credibility factor arousing public indignation by exempting labeling from irradiated foods.

I concur with FDA that a degree of apprehension is warranted since irradiated food has not been subjected to extensive tests whereby a long term surmise of its potential physical impact can be ascertained. What has filtered through is: New free radical formation, reduction in nutrient content, impaired color, taste and smell. All of which are cause enough why consumers should have the option in deciding whether to purchase an altered product. I empathize with the FDA knowing Congress deliberately keeps the agency under funded and under staffed with only 80 employees to monitor 3,000 prescription drugs sold. An estimated 2 million people are hospitalized annually from drug side effects and 100,000 die. I believe these startling figures have galvanized the FDA to design new drug labels to aid doctors. This correlates with labeling irradiated food. Since beef, poultry, fruits, and vegetables fall into that category it is imperative that the consumer be apprised, through labeling, what in reality they are buying.

I've written Congressman Peter De Fazio about FDA's outlandish proposal in effect to deceive consumers by omission of labeling information on irradiated food. By your actions it will

be determined whether it is public Health you cherish most or are motivated by congressional fulminations. Our nation prides itself on its Sunshine Laws, democracies guiding light.

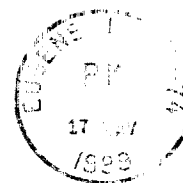
Respectfully,

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